

*Selected
Intermediate
Poems*

BY

R. P. Kichlu. M.A.L.T



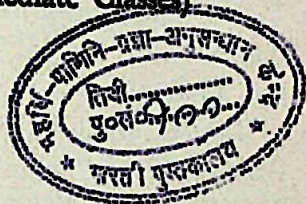
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12 Explanation
6 Substance

SELECTED INTERMEDIATE POEMS

(Intended for Intermediate Classes)



EDITED BY

R. P. KICHLU, M.A., L.T., P.E.S. (RETD.)

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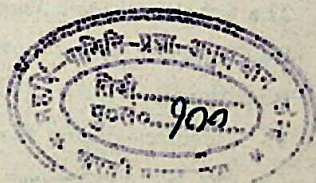
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PREFACE

In the compilation of this little volume of 'Selected Intermediate Poems' my aim has been to select easy yet representative poems having real value for the young people entering the Intermediate stage. Difficult and oft-repeated poems by well-known poets which may have served their purpose in the old set-up, have been, as far as possible, excluded from the present selection, and I hope it will be found suitable for the students of the Intermediate classes.

Besides the lives of the poets an appreciation has been given at the beginning of each poem and notes and exercises at the end of the text.

I have included two poems by our national poet, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore—'Jana-Gana-Mana' being one of them and one poem—Guerdon—by the late Shrimati Sarojini Naidu. These poems form part of our national heritage.



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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ENGLISH POETRY

I

It is neither easy nor necessary to define what poetry is. Poets themselves and their critics have tried to offer definitions of poetry. These definitions are doubtless very suggestive, yet when we look at them critically and compare them with one another, we find that far from giving us any help in answering this question, they simply distract us because in defining poetry all of them have not the same point of view in their mind's eye nor the same outlook on life. But we know instinctively what poetry is though we may not be able to give its exact definition. 'Poetry', says Dr. Johnson, 'is metrical composition; it is the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason and its essence is invention'. 'What is poetry', asks Mill, 'but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself?'. Carlyle regarded poetry as 'musical thought' and Shelley as 'the expression of the imagination'. Matthew Arnold thinks 'it is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty'. According to Edgar Allan Poe, who is now considered as the father of modern poetry, 'it is the rhythmic creation of beauty'. Ruskin defines it as 'the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions' and Mr. Watts-Dunton as 'the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language'.

All these and many other definitions not quoted here are very suggestive indeed, but some are too abstract and

others too narrow in outlook, because they recognise only that kind of poetry which interested the writer personally, excluding all the rest. When we read poetry we move in a world of reality created for us by the poet and these definitions fail to take account of that world of reality and take us we know not where. They express what is poetical in general but not what is specifically called poetry. An exact definition of poetry is not necessary for our purposes; at the same time we should try to mark out some fairly general and constant characteristics of poetry in order to have some guiding principles to understand its nature.

Vision or imagination, feeling and expression are the three main constituents of the part of literature called poetry. When we deal with the poetical aspect of life, we obviously refer to those facts of life, observations, experiences and incidents, in which vision and feeling or emotion plays such an important part. By vision is meant the power of observing things which to an ordinary eye have no meaning at all, but which to a poet are not only full of beauty but also great spiritual significance. Poets like Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson, to name only a few shining lights, have observed nature minutely and associated it with thoughts and incidents of life in such a manner that the result is almost a new creation.

But however brilliant the vision may be, unless it comes from the soul and is presented in a good form, it may not be considered poetry at all, much less great or good poetry. It was not for nothing that Coleridge cried:

"Ah from the soul itself must issue forth

A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud

Enveloping the Earth'

The poet has before him the visible and the invisible worlds, but unless he touches them with the fire of emotion and thought and describes them for the benefit of mankind in his own inimitable manner, the result will be disappointing indeed. When the first Sanskrit poet, Valmiki, saw a fowler strike a bird, the outburst of the feeling of grief caused by the sight took the form of a Verse,* which to this day is associated with his name. This poet is the famous author of the epic poem—the Ramayana. He was so overpowered with the feeling of grief and pity for the bird that verse naturally and spontaneously flowed from his soul, as it were, and poetry was born. Valmiki is, therefore, called the first or primeval poet of Sanskrit Literature.

There can be no great poetry without emotion, no music, no singing, dancing or painting, in short, no fine art. All the fine arts are the concrete expressions of emotion and are man's creation. In poetry as a fine art, fear, anger, hate, love and other emotions play an important part, but whatever the basis, feeling without vision will be like a body without soul. When, however, both these combine in a delightful manner, through the wonderful insight of a poetic genius, then we have great poetry, provided the third essential characteristic is also present.

What is the third constituent of poetry? The above qualities are no doubt essential for all true poetry—but not alone : there must be a special vehicle for the communication to others of the vision and feeling of a great poetic soul. This will be poetry only when the poetic qualities of feeling and imagination are embodied in a certain form of

* मा निपाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः वाक्वरीः शमाः ।

यत्क्रीञ्चमिदुनादेकमवधोः काममोहितम् ॥

expression, that is, metre or rhythmical language. This special form is necessary to embody the spirit of poetry.

There are critics, however, who have denied that for poetry any special form is necessary. They ignore the fact that poetry is a special kind of art and that systematically rhythmic language is one of its essential conditions. Leigh Hunt has well said that 'the reason why Verse is necessary to the form of poetry is that the perfection of the poetical spirit demands it—that the circle of its enthusiasm, beauty and power is incomplete without it'. True, the spirit of truest poetry has often been expressed without the medium of verse and even in prose but that does not turn the subject-matter into actual poetry. It will be poetry only when it is treated in metre. Matthew Arnold has also pointed out the essential difference between 'imaginative production in verse and imaginative production in prose'. "The rhythm and measure of poetry", he maintains, "elevated to a regularity, rhythm and force, very different from that of the rhythm and measure which can pervade prose, are a part of its perfection." In cases where a distinction between prose and poetry is not possible, no hard and fast rule can be laid down, but as a general rule we can safely recognise that metre is the most general characteristic of poetry, considered as a special kind of literary art and the term poetry can usually be employed only to connote such a composition.

That there is close relationship between rhythmic form and poetical feeling—as evidenced from the instance of Valmiki's outburst of the feeling of grief in verse referred to above—cannot be denied, but apart from this it will be conceded that the metrical form affords much aesthetic pleasure to the reader and that it is a part of its perfection.

It appeals to the senses much more readily than prose, however perfect, because the poetic spirit spontaneously seeks to express itself in that form and so appeals to the heart much more quickly. Goswami Tulsidas's deep feeling for Rama as the incarnation of God could only be adequately expressed through the medium of verse and the measure of his love is also the measure of his success as a poet because the deeper the feeling, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm, as Mill has well maintained. Had Tulsidas written his Ramayana in prose, the student can judge for himself whether it would have pleased and almost galvanised his hearers as it does today.

From this it is clear that the relation between poetic substance and metrical form is not only incidental but real and psychological and essential for all true poetry. Metrical form has a music of its own which has a subtle magical power over the emotions. It stirs the very soul as nothing else does. Turn the finest passages of Shakespeare, Milton and Tennyson into prose and you will realise the truth of this assertion much more distinctly. Form is, therefore, an essential characteristic of poetry.

II

There are two principal divisions of poetry: (1) Subjective poetry which deals with personal thoughts, experiences and feelings of the poet, (2) Impersonal or objective poetry which deals with created incidents or stories. The distinction though true enough is not, however, applicable to modern poetry in which both the personal and impersonal elements continually combine.

Subjective poetry is often called, though loosely, lyrical poetry, because it was originally composed to be sung to

the accompaniment of the lyre, a musical instrument. The ballads and epic poems which used to be so sung might also be regarded as lyrical, but, strictly speaking, they are not personal in the sense in which we have used the term here. This kind of poetry is very common and full of variety and deals with all sorts of individual and personal experiences and emotions as well as human interests as a whole. The lyrics of love, of patriotism and religious emotion are very common varieties. For a lyric to be good we have to take into consideration what sort of emotion has inspired it, whether its imagery is vivid and beautiful, and above all, whether it is characterised by sincerity and beauty which is the sheet-anchor of all fine art. Though essentially individual or personal in character, the world's best lyrics are those which may be termed 'universal', that is, which may embody what is typically human rather than individual or personal.

Further important divisions of this kind of poetry are the Ode, the Elegy, and the Sonnet.

The 'Ode' may be defined as 'any strain of enthusiastic or exalted lyrical verse directed to a fixed purpose and dealing progressively with a dignified theme'. Among the Greeks, the term 'Ode' was used for any kind of lyrical composition—drinking and love songs as well as the lofty occasional poems of Pindar. Such classical forms, however are not very common in English. From the definition given above it will be noticed that the term is both ambiguous and elastic and there are no differentiating features to distinguish it from other kinds of lyrics. There has been, therefore, some diversity of views as to which lyric may be called an Ode and which not. But there is no doubt that the theme of the Ode should be exalted or

dignified and that it should also be characterised by a certain amount of elaboration in thought and treatment. It may be regular like Shelley's 'West Wind' and Keats' 'Ode to the Nightingale' or irregular like Wordsworth's 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality' or Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington'.

The Elegy is a brief lyric of mourning or sorrow on personal bereavement. Its basis is, therefore, absolute sincerity of emotion and expression. In the evolution of literature it has undergone some changes, *e. g.*, it has taken the form of a memorial poem to some great man containing reminiscences and thoughts on his life and character. Sometimes, too, personal interest in the subject yields place to the problems of philosophy and the poet's meditative mood begins to unravel the mysteries of life and destiny. Milton's 'Lycidas', Shelley's 'Adonais', and Matthew Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel' and 'Thyrsis' are the best examples of this type. In Tennyson's 'In Memoriam', one of the best elegies, both these elements are very beautifully combined. This poem is at once a tribute to a dead friend and a philosophical poem of deep meaning. Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' which is deservedly famous as an English poem, is another outstanding example.

The Sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines composed under certain prescribed rules of its own. Originally it came from Italy where Petrarch made it popular. It came to the English soil during the age of Queen Elizabeth. The special rules governing the composition of the sonnet have more often than not been ignored by English writers and so two types have grown up: one, the Italian type and the other, the Shakespearcan type. The emotion of love was the one theme which expressed itself through the

Sonnet, but Milton changed the theme and gave 'the notes to glory' and Wordsworth too did not like the limitations imposed upon it.

III

Objective poetry includes the following kinds : (1) The Ballad, (2) Narrative poetry, including the Epic, Metrical Romances and Dramatic poetry.

It is not possible in a short introduction to study all these forms of literature in detail, but we propose to touch briefly upon each branch so that the student may have some idea as to what each signifies. In objective poetry the poet deals with the outer world of passion and action and handles his subject without intruding himself upon them in a direct manner, whereas in subjective poetry he gives vent to his feeling in regard to a particular subject immediately and expresses the meaning of the outer world in terms of his own thoughts and emotions. In an epic poem or dramatic piece he creates characters who speak their minds in particular situations and there is no occasion for the poet to reveal his feelings or views directly anywhere. He creates a world which goes on, as he wishes it no doubt, but at the same time under the stress of its own being. It is true that no poet can produce his work of art by entirely detaching himself from it or without revealing the impact of his own personality on the views and feelings expressed by his created characters. But as a rule, he does so indirectly, not directly.

The English ballad is a short story in verse and represents a very early stage in the evolution of the poetic art. Popular ballads used to be sung by wandering minstrels and so they contained simple yet energetic descriptions

of deeds of valour and love along with an admixture of supernaturalism. 'The Eve of St. John' by Scott and the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by Coleridge are examples of the modern ballad in its developed form, but its expansion is natural and not the artificial reproduction of the primitive type.

Narrative poetry includes the Epic proper, metrical romances and dramatic poetry with all its sub-divisions. The Epic is a longer narrative in verse like the great Sanskrit Epic 'Mahabharata' in the composition of which legends, folk poems and current stories have all contributed a share and it is not certain whether the author is one or many. This is called the Epic of Growth.

The Epic of Art is the result of individual genius, scholarship and culture. Here, too, the same mythological heroes and supernatural beings are in evidence but the style is bookish, not spontaneous or simple as that of the Epic of Growth. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' is the best example of this type.

The only class of narrative poetry which need be mentioned here is that which represents the tendency towards realism in poetic art. Its subjects are related to our daily experiences, manners, customs and economic life, yet in treatment it is superbly poetic and often very humorous and delightful. Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village' with its excellent character studies is a very good example of this class of poetry.

I think enough has been said to enable the young reader to understand the main currents of English poetry; and the Metrical romance and Dramatic poetry need not be treated in detail in such a short introduction.

1. MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU

(1879—1949)

[Mrs. Naidu occupies a unique place as a poet-politician of Modern India. She, by virtue of her being a poetess of no mean order, has justly been called 'The Nightingale of India'. Under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, she took an active part in the various political movements intended to throw off the foreign yoke. She rose to the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress in 1925—the highest honour that the country could bestow on any one. She served several terms of imprisonment in His Majesty's Jail. When the Englishmen decided to quit India in August, 1947 she was called upon to serve the people as the first Governor of U. P. in free India—a position which she held with distinction. After a short illness she passed away at Lucknow on March 2, 1949.]

Among her main literary works mention may be made of 'The Golden Threshold', 'The Bird of Time' and 'The Broken Wing'.]

Appreciation : The poetess has described how God has blessed every part of His creation with peculiarities of its own. When the spring season arrives in the months of February and March, the vegetation of the earth begins to pulsate with new life, the old leaves wither away and the new ones sprout up in their places. The trees that bear fruit in the summer season are then in full bloom. Birds have been endowed with powerful wings and colourful feathers—so beautiful that they are the objects of our wonder.

Whatever else may be given to others, the poetess asks for herself only three things, viz., Love, Truth and the Power of singing the praise of God. According to her, every created thing has been fully provided by God according to its needs and circumstances.

The poem brings out in full the intelligence and bountifulness of the over-ruling Providence.

GUERDON

(1)

To the fields and forest
The gifts of the spring,
To hawk and heron
The pride of their wing;
Her grace to the panther,
Her tints to the dove...
For me, O my Master,
The rapture of Love;

(2)

To the hand of the diver
The gems of the tide,
To the eyes of the bridegroom
The face of his bride;
To the heart of a dreamer
The dreams of his youth...
For me, O my Master;
The rapture of Truth;

GUERDON

To priests and to prophets

The joy of their creeds,

To kings and to cohorts

The glory of their deeds;

And peace to the vanquished

And hope to the strong....

For me, O my Master,

The rapture of Song.

—Surgini Naidu

2. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(1861—1941)

[Rabindranath Tagore, poet, patriot, humanist, educationist and artist, was born in Calcutta on 6th May, 1861. He was the youngest son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, a scholarly and deeply religious man. The young Tagore was educated privately. From his early childhood he was so sensitive to beauty and music that he began to write verses at the age of eight. When he was seventeen he accompanied his second brother to England with the idea of studying law. In 1901, Tagore founded the famous University 'Shantiniketan' at Bolpur. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. He was knighted in 1915, but he resigned the knighthood in 1919 as a protest against the Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre. Although a staunch nationalist he believed in internationalism and held the view that the East and West, instead of being irreconcilable, should be complementary. His grateful countrymen lovingly called him 'Gurudeva'. His main works are—

Gitanjali (1913),

The Crescent Moon (1917),

Lectures on Personality (1925),

The Religion of Man (1931).

Tagore wrote songs and lyrics which have now become world famous on account of their love of nature, fresh air and intense patriotism.]

Appreciation : In this poem Tagore has tried to show that the children are happier than the grown-up people and the

former are easily satisfied with the ordinary things of life. But when they grow up, they begin to aspire for the impossible which lies at the root of their restless ways in later life.

Main thought
PLAYTHINGS

Child, how happy you are sitting in the dust,
playing with a broken twig all the morning.

I smile at your play with that little bit of a
broken twig.

Am busy with my accounts, adding up
figures by the hour.

Perhaps you glance at me and think, "What a
stupid game to spoil your morning with."

Child, I have forgotten the art of being
absorbed in sticks and mud-pies.

I seek out costly playthings, and gather lumps
of gold and silver.

With whatever you find you create your glad
games, I spend both my time and my
strength over things I never can obtain.

In my frail canoe I struggle to cross the sea of
desire, and forget that I, too, am playing
a game.

—Rabindranath Tagore.

3. MARY DOBSON

[She was an English poetress and died in 1923. The following is one of her well-known poems.]

Appreciation : The Taj Mahal of Agra was built by Emperor Shah Jahan, in memory of his loving wife, Mumtaz Mahal Begum. It is a mausoleum and contains the last remains of the queen and when the Emperor died he was also buried by his wife's side. The Taj is one of the most beautiful buildings of the world. It is a 'dream in marble' and enshrines eternal love in a magnificent manner.

Mary Dobson's beautiful poem on the Taj leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

THE TAJ MAHAL

Said the King all broken-hearted
For his loved, and loving wife,
"Since God willed that we should be parted
By the woe of human life,
Lest the world should e'er forget her
This good wife so dear to me
In a fair tomb I will see her,
So that she remembered be".

And the King all broken-hearted
made a search for Sought for workmen full of skill
Who would raise for her, departed
A fair tomb with brain and will.

my defect And they built it white and shining
Flawless, matchless in its grace, *with a beauty*
While the king in sorrow living,
Saw it raised up in its place.

THE TAJ MAHAL

7

Saw it through his bitter grieving
 Never less but ever new,
 For no comfort e'er receiving
 In his sorrow aged he grew;
 Till his eyes grown dim with grieving,
 Closed for ever on this life,
 And they laid him there fast sleeping
 By his loved and loving wife.

always
 But the Taj, the tale still telling,
 Stands in Agra city great,
 White and shining, all excelling
 In its beauty and its state.

There they lie, the loving-hearted
 Neath its marble side by side,
 Those in life so long-time parted
 Death no longer can divide.

For though pressed from many quarters

True love steadfast still abides,

Is not quenched by many waters,

Even death's relentless tides,

All true love is never failing

Howsoe'er men faithless be,

But o'er everything prevailing

Lives to all eternity. *winning over*

सदा जीवित रहि lives for ever

—Mary Dobson.

4. ISSAC WATTS

(1674—1748)

[Issac Watts, a well-known English poet of his time, was the son of a school master. In 1695 he wrote his first hymn 'Behold the Glories of the Lamb' and published his 'Collected Works' in 1710.]

Appreciation : In this poem the poet advises us to lead a busy life every day and work studiously so that we may enjoy the fruits of our labour later on. Here, he gives the example of the Little Busy Bee that does not waste its time, but 'gathers honey all the day from ev'ry op'ning flow'r'. We should do the same if we want to make our life profitable.

THE LITTLE BUSY BEE

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From ev'ry op'ning flow'r.

How skilfully she builds her cell;
How neat she spreads the wax,
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour or of skill
I would be busy too :
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

THE LITTLE BUSY BEE

9

In books, or works, or healthful play

Let my first years be past,

That I may give for every day

Some good account at last.

—Isaac Watts.

5. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1760—1850)

[Wordsworth has been called 'the high-priest of Nature'. He is one of the pioneers of the age of Romantic Revival which was ushered in by the publication of the Lyrical Ballads by Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wordsworth in his Preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads stated his theory of poetic diction asserting that 'there is no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition'. After the death of Southey in 1743, Wordsworth was appointed Poet Laureate.

He is one of the greatest of English poets. His poetry is simple and natural in style and produces a love of natural things in the minds of its readers.

His main works are : The Excursion, The Recluse, The Skylark, The Daffodils, Ode to Duty, Ode on the Intimations of Immortality and Tintern Abbey.]

Appreciation : This is one of the best known poems of William Wordsworth and contains the oft-quoted line "The Child is father of the Man". Wordsworth hopes that the sight of the rainbow which delighted him in his childhood will continue to please him even in his old age. His great wish is to love not only the rainbow but all natural things in all the stages of his life.

THE RAINBOW

11

THE RAINBOW

My heart leaps up when I behold;

A rainbow in the sky :

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die;

more wise than man or the man of future.

✓ The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety. *disruption or*
continuity *love in 13!*

—W. Wordsworth.

6. THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

Appreciation : In this sonnet Wordsworth raises his voice against the materialism of his age. In his opinion we waste our powers in the pursuit of worldly prosperity alone and lose all touch with nature.

The world is too much with us; late and soon;

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,

The winds that will be howling at all hours:

And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not—Great God—I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed out-worn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea

Have glimpses that would make me less

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

—W. Wordsworth.

7. ROBERT BRIDGES

(1844—1930)

[Robert Bridges was educated at the Public School at Eton and later on he graduated from Oxford in 1867. He studied medicine at Bartholomew's Hospital (London), but gave up the medical profession in 1882 and devoted himself exclusively to literature. He wrote critical essays, poems and plays. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1913 in succession to Alfred Austin. He died in 1930.]

Of his works, the following may be mentioned :—

The Growth of Love (1889), Milton's Prosody (1893), Shorter Poems (1894), A Study of John Keats (1895), The Spirit of Man (1916).

Robert Bridges was a poet of the classical tradition. He had the classical temper and restraint as well. In the spirit of his poems, he was quite different from the age in which he flourished. In the felicity of diction and subtle sense of rhythm he was nearer to the 19th century poets. He was reflective, pensive and cool to a degree, that made some of his poems lack the 'haunting sweetness' of lyrical poems.]

Appreciation : The poet thinks that to love beautiful things in Nature is to praise God. He expresses the hope to have the happiness of creating beautiful poetry, although he fears his dream of doing so may turn out untrue when he grows up.

I LOVE ALL BEAUTEIOUS THINGS

I love all beauteous things,

I ^{search for} seek and ^{worship} adore them:

God hath no better praise, ^{compliment} ~~उत्तम~~

And man in his hasty days ^{अप्यु नटजीवन}

Is honoured for them.

^{beautiful verses.}
I too will something make

And joy in the making.

Altho' tomorrow it seem

Like the ^{meaningless} empty words of a dream

Remembered, on waking.

—Robert Bridges.

9. ROBERT SOUTHEY

(1774—1843)

[Robert Southey is famous for his prose writings, particularly his admirable 'Life of Nelson', which has been called the best short biography in the English language. As a poet, his fame rests on a few lyrics such as 'The Battle of Blenheim', 'The Scholar' and 'The Inchcape Rock'. He became Poet Laureate in 1813.]

Appreciation : In this poem the scholar spends his days in his library amongst the books written by famous authors now dead. These books, which are like good friends, add to his joy in prosperity and give him comfort in adversity. The scholar likes to read the lives of the great men of past ages and learn useful lessons from them.

THE SCHOLAR

My days among the Dead are past;
 Around me I behold,
 Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
 'The mighty minds of old.
 My never-failing friends are they,
 With whom I converse day by day.
 With them I take delight in weal
 And seek relief in woe,
 And while I understand and feel
 How much to them I owe,
 My cheeks have often been bedew'd
 With tears of thoughtful gratitude ;

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
 I live in long-past years,
 Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
 Partake their hopes and fears,
 And from their lessons seek and find
 Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon *at once.*
 My place with them will be,
 And I with them shall travel on
 Through all Futurity; *the times to time*
 Yet leaving here a name, I trust *अनेवाला जन्मना*
 That will not perish in the dust.
be destroyed or

—R. Southey.

10. RUDYARD KIPLING

(1865—1936)

[Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay on December 30, 1865. He was educated in England. He returned to India in 1882 and became a journalist and a writer of repute. He was on the staff of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore and the *Pioneer* of Allahabad which were two of the most influential papers and they voiced the Anglo-Indian opinion.]

Appreciation: In this reflective poem, Kipling says that if a man wants to obtain mastery over the earth and everything that is in it, he should cultivate certain qualities of character. This will enable him to become a man in the real sense of the term.

IF—

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If you can dream—and not make dreams your
master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your
aim;

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
 And treat those two impostors just the same;
 If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
 Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
 And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools.

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings
 And never breathe a word about your loss;
 If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you
 Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on".

If you can talk with crowds and keep your 'virtue,
 Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
 If neither foes ^{nor} loving friends can hurt you,
 If all men ^{depend upon} count with you but none too much;
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
 And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

-R. Kipling

11. ROBERT BROWNING

(1812—1880)

[Robert Browning is one of the greatest poets of England but he was not as popular in his time as his contemporary Lord Tennyson. His poems, particularly longer poems, are often obscure and difficult to understand, but his shorter lyrics are beautiful in style, thought-provoking and therefore easy to understand. Among his great poems are 'The Ring and the Book', 'Men and Women', 'Dramatis Personae' and a large number of plays and lyrics. Browning had a great insight into human nature.]

Appreciation: The following poem, which has been taken from his play, 'Pippa Passes,' tells with charming colour and melody how the child-heroine, Pippa, a silk-winder of Asolo in Italy, spent a single holiday, the New Year's Day, which was the one day she had to herself in the whole year. She decides to imagine that she is, one after the other, four different characters who are regarded as the happiest people in Asolo. In order to do this she passes the whole day in roaming about the town with her song on her lips. Some of these characters do not turn out to be the happiest, but that is a thing which so often happens in the world. It was a day of bright sunshine and everything appeared extremely beautiful and cheerful. So her faith in God and His goodness returned to her. Pippa's day ends, as she goes back to bed uttering the words :—

All service is the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we : There is no last nor first.

PIPPA'S SONG

The year's at the spring,

And day's at the morn;

Morning's at seven;

The hill-side's dew-pearled:

The ~~lark's~~ ^{singing bird} on the wings;

The ~~snail's~~ ^{flaying} on the thorn;

God's in His heaven—

All's right with the world.

—Robert Browning.

12. ROBERT HERRICK

(1591—1664)

[Robert Herrick was an English poet. He was an adept in the art of word selection. His expression gives his thoughts 'the freshness of the morning dew'. His well-known works are : Noble Numbers and Hesperides.]

Appreciation : The poet shows here the passing nature of the things of this world. Everything, howsoever beautiful it may be, must fade and die sooner or later.

TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,

Why do you fall so fast?

Your date is not so past

But you may stay yet here awhile

To blush and gently smile

And go at last.

What! were ye born to be

An hour or half's delight,

And so to bid good night?

'Twas pity Nature brought you forth

Merely to show your worth

And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'er so brave:

And after they have shown their pride
 Like you, while, they glide *pass away softly*
 Into the grave. *not at 300000*

—Robert Herrick.

The word (leaves here has two meaning, one
 is the petal of the flower, the other is the
 page of the book.

13. JOHN MILTON

(1608—1674)

[Milton 'the God-gifted organ voice of England' made himself immortal by writing *Paradise Lost*—the best epic poem in the English language. He was a Puritan in religious belief and a Republican in his political views, with the result that he could not escape the consequences of his conviction. As a result of his studious habits and hard work till late at night his eye-sight suffered so much that in 1652 he became blind—a fact which he laments so much in this well-known sonnet. His main works are: *L' Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, *Comus*, *Arcopagitica*, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.

Milton's sonnets are personal or controversial or political in nature. He enriched this form of writing by enlarging the scope of it. In the words of Landor:—

'He caught the sonnet from the dainty hand
Of love, who cried to lose it, and he gave
The notes to glory'.]

Appreciation : The following sonnet is personal. In this sonnet Milton expresses his thoughts on his blindness. He is full of sorrow because it prevents him from serving his God in the best way possible. It shows the great nobility of his mind and resignation to the will of God.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more
bent

To serve therewith my Maker and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,—
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
I fondly ask:—But Patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: God doth not
need,
Either man's work, or His own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve Him best; His
state
Is Kingly; thousands at His bidding speed
And post ov'r land and ocean without rest: 66
They also serve who only stand and wait.

—John Milton.



14. BEN JONSON

(1573—1637)

[Ben Jonson was born in Westminster (England) after the death of his father. He was a very well-read man of his time and a close friend and contemporary of Shakespeare. He wrote admirable verses, which are dignified and effective, but they lack the ease and grace of Shakespeare.]

Some of his best known poems are: *Every man in his Humour*; *Every Man Out of His Humour*; *Volpone*; *The Silent Woman* and *The Alchemist*.]

Appreciation : The main idea of this poem is that life should not be valued in terms of years; a long-lived man is not necessarily a better man. It should rather be valued on the basis of a person's nobility of conduct among his fellowmen.

A short life of usefulness is to be preferred any day to a long but worthless life.

THE NOBLE NATURE

It is not growing like a tree
 In bulk, doth make Man better be;
 Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere;
 A lily of a day
 Is fairer far in May, *(more beautiful)*
more beautiful *26*

✓
6 Although it fall and die that night;

It was the plant and flower of light

due relation in size with the light
In small proportions we just beauties see;

And in short measures life may perfect be.

3/1/17
—Ben Jonson.

15. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(1564—1616)

[Shakespeare who knew 'small Latin and less Greek' had to leave Stratford-on-Avon, his native village, because he was involved in deer-poaching escapades in the park of Sir Thomas Lucy. In the city of London he first became an actor and then a playwright. He wrote in all thirty-seven plays—comedies, historical plays, tragedies and dramatic romances. His greatness for all time has been ensured because of the four world-renowned tragedies written by him—*King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. In 1611, he came back to his village-home and lived a happy and prosperous life till his death in 1616.]

Appreciation : These lines have been taken from *The Merchant of Venice* and are among the highly valued lines written by Shakespeare. These words were uttered by Portia when she tried to persuade Shylock to be kind and merciful.

MERCY

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;

MERCY

29

His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is ^{better than} ~~is not~~ ^{rule} ~~power~~ above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
 It is an ^{quality} attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
 When mercy seasons justice.

—Shakespeare.

16. LORD TENNYSON

(1809—1892)

[Tennyson succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate in 1850 and was created a baron in 1884. He has been called 'the representative poet of his age'. His keen sense of perception coupled with his happy choice of words made him an artist even before he was a poet. His well-known poem, 'In Memoriam' expresses his sorrow for the death of his greatest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, and his own broodings over death and the problems of Modern Science. His other important works are *The Princess*, *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, *Idylls of the King* and *Queen Mary*.

Tennyson's poetry is at once simple and lofty, charming and revealing, and so perfect in form that it has become an integral part of the literature of the world.]

Appreciation : The following lines, which have been taken from *The Passing of Arthur*, refer to the final departure of King Arthur, who was the founder of the order of Knighthood of the Round Table. King Arthur is leaving in a barge and going, nobody knows, where. Sir Bedivere, a knight of the Round Table, who had accompanied the King, was very much upset and did not know what to do at the dissolution of the order of Knighthood which the King's departure implied. These lines contain the advice of the King.

King Arthur's deeds are told in the *Idylls of the King*.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge !

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,

Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?

I have lived my life, and that which I have done

May He within himself make pure, but thou,

If shouldst never see my face again.

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep and goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer

Both for themselves and those who call them
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God".

—Lord Tennyson.

17. PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(1792—1822)

[He was one of the greatest of lyrical poets of England and was educated at Eton and Oxford. He was drowned in 1822 in the Bay of Spezzia at the age of thirty.]

His famous longer poems are : *Prometheus Unbound and the Cenci*, and his most popular lyrics are *The Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples, The Sensitive Plant, The Cloud, Ode to the West Wind and To a Skylark*.]

Appreciation : This poem was produced out of the anguish of the poet's heart—his disappointments and failures in life. Every word of this poem is charged with an indescribable feeling of eternal regret and bitter disappointment. This is the last poem which the poet wrote before his premature death.

A LAMENT

O World ! O Life ! O Time !
 On whose last steps I climb
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more—O never more !
 Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring and summer and winter hoar
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
 No more—O never more !

—P. B. Shelley

18. HENRY AUSTIN DOBSON

(1840—1921)

[Henry Austin Dobson was an English poet. His volume of verse includes 'Proverbs in Porcelain'. Among his prose works may be mentioned lives of Fielding, Steele, Goldsmith and Richardson.]

Appreciation : In these lines the poet tells us that he prefers Friendship to Fame. Fame is useless if a person has no friends for it would die with the person. On the other hand if he has friends they would extol him for his virtues and forget his shortcomings. ॐ

FAME AND FRIENDSHIP

Fame is a food that dead man can eat,
I have no stomach for such meat.
In little light and narrow room
They eat it in the silent tomb,
With no kind voice of comrade near
To bid the feaster be of cheer.

But friendship is a nobler thing,
Of friendship it is good to sing.
For truly, when a man shall end,
He lives in the memory of his friend,
Who does his better part recall ॐ
And of his fault make funeral.

—Henry Austin Dobson.

19. JAMES MONTGOMERY

(1771—1854)

[James Montgomery is a British poet. His works include *'The World before the Flood'* and *'The Pelican Island'*.]

Appreciation: This is an ideal which every youth of the Motherland should have before him. The poet appeals to them to turn this earth into heaven with their efforts, their virtues and excellence.

ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH

Higher, higher, will we climb
Up the mount of glory,
That our names may live through time
In our country's story;
Happy, when her welfare calls,
He who conquers, he who falls:

Deeper, deeper, let us toil
In the mines of knowledge;
Nature's wealth and learning's spoil
Win from school and college;
Delve we there for richer gems
Than the stars of diadems.

ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH

35

Onward, onward, will we press

good qualities Through the path of duty;

Virtue is true happiness,

perfection Excellence, true beauty:

Minds are of supernal birth,

Let us make a heaven of earth.

—James Montgomery.

Excellence - perfection

20. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Appreciation : The English version of the famous 'JANA-GANA-MANA' song was first given by the poet in Madanapalle in Chittoor district, South India in 1919 when the poet renounced his knighthood as a protest against the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy. The Adhinayak in this poem is God.

'JANA-GANA-MANA'

God.

(I)

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny.
Thy name rouses the hearts
of the Punjab, Sind, Gujrat, and Maratha,
of Dravid, Orissa and Bengal.

It echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and
Himalayas,

Mingles in the music of Jumna and Ganga,
and is chanted by the waves of the Indian Sea.
They pray for thy blessing and sing thy
praise.

Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

(2)

Day and night, the voice goes out from
 " land to land,
 calling Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains
 round thy throne
 and Parsees, Mussalmans and Christians.
 Offerings are brought to thy shrine by ^{temple}
 the East and the West
 to be woven in a garland of love. ^{ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨੀ ਮਨਸਿ}
 Thou bringest the hearts of all peoples ^{ਮਿਲਿਓ}
 into the harmony of one life,
 Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
 Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

(3)

^{ਤੂੰ} Eternal Charioteer, thou drivest man's
 history ^{ਦੀ}
 along the road ^{ਅਸੰਤਰੀਤ ਰਸਤੇ} rugged with rises and falls
^{ਸ਼ਕਤੀ} of Nations.
Amidst all ^{ਸੰਘਰਸ਼} tribulations and terror
 thy trumpet sounds to hearten those that
^{ਨਿਰਾਸ਼} despair and droop, ^{ਦੁਖੀ}
 and guide all people in their paths of
^{ਤਰਸ} peril and pilgrimage.
 Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
 Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

(4)

When the long dreary night was dense with gloom
 and the country lay still in a stupor,
 thy Mother's arms held her,
 thy wakeful eyes bent upon her face,
 till she was rescued from the dark evil
dreams
 that oppressed her spirit,
 Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
 Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

(5)

The night dawns, the sun rises in the East,
 the birds sing, the morning breeze brings
 a stir of new life.

Touched by golden rays of thy love
 India wakes up and bends her head at thy
 feet.

Thou King of all Kings,
 Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
 Victory, Victory, Victory to thee.

—Rabindranath Tagore.

1. GUERDON

NOTES

Guerdon—Reward. This is a poetical expression.

The gifts of the spring—The new leaves and flowers which make trees wear a new look in the spring season.

Hawk & heron—Two different kinds of birds. Here birds in general.

Tints—Beautiful colours.

Rapture—Excessive joy.

The gems of the tide—The pearls and other precious gems that are brought out of the ocean by divers.

The Rapture of Truth—The excessive joy which one feels when one realizes some truth. The poetess asks God to bestow on her divine truth and the joy which accompanies its realization.

Cohort—Troops.

The vanquished—The defeated and weakened people.

EXERCISES

(1) What are the gifts which the poetess asks for herself?

(2) Explain, "For me, O my Master,
The Rapture of Song".

2. PLAYTHINGS

NOTES

Adding up figures by the hour—Always busy in writing accounts.

Lumps of gold & silver—Collecting money and other costly things.

Canoe—A small boat. Here it refers to the weak human body.

Sea of desire—The big gulf that lies between us and the cherished objects.

EXERCISES

(1) Why does Tagore prefer the life of a child to that of a grown-up man?

(2) Mention the things which keep a grown-up man engaged all the time?

3. THE TAJ MAHAL

NOTES

Sought for—Made a search for.

With brain and will—Intelligently and energetically.

Flawless—Without any defect.

Matchless in its grace—Without an equal in beauty.

Still—Always.

Abides—Lives.

Is not.....tides—Even the cruel hand of death is not powerful enough to subdue true love.

Lives to all eternity—Lives for ever.

EXERCISES

(1) What did the King do to make his beloved wife immortal?

(2) What can you say about the Taj Mahal?

(3) Explain the last four lines of this poem.

4. THE LITTLE BUSY BEE

NOTES

Doth—Does.

Shining hour—i. e., each hour of the day which is bright on account of sunshine.

Food—Honey.

Satan—Devil.

Still—Always.

Idle hands—Persons who lead an idle life and waste their time.

That—So that.

Some good account at last—This refers to the belief of the Christians that on the Day of Judgement God will ask everyone how he spent his life in the world. The poet advises us to work in the world honestly, so that we may give a good account of ourselves after our death.

EXERCISES

- (1) What lesson do we learn from the life of a bee?
- (2) What are the dangers of an idle life?

5. THE RAINBOW

NOTES

The Child is father of the Man—All that will appear later on in the character of a grown-up man is already present, though in an undeveloped state, in the child. The child has the full potentialities of a man as a seed contains the big tree in a potential state.

It was Wordsworth's belief that the child, coming as he does quite recently from heaven, possesses in him all the godly qualities and is thus superior (father) to the man

As he grows old and comes into contact with the people of the world, he gets spoiled and his spiritual qualities become less and less.

Cf. And much it grieved my heart to think,

What man has made of man

(Wordsworth : 'Written in Early Spring').

Natural piety—The good qualities with which nature has endowed the child. The poet prays that as he grows old he should be as simple, true and loving as he was in his childhood.

EXERCISES

- (1) Give the summary of the poem in your own words.
- (2) What was Wordsworth's poetical creed and how far does this poem illustrate it?
- (3) Explain in your own words :—
The Child is father of the Man; Natural piety.

6. THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

NOTES

The world is too much with us—We attach far more importance to the pursuit of wealth than to the appreciation of natural things.

That is ours—That we can properly appreciate.

We have given our hearts away—We love pursuit of wealth beyond measure.

Sordid boon—It is something low because we have given up appreciation of nature and acquired a love for material prosperity in its place.

Upgathered—gathered up; ceased.

Like sleeping flowers—Just as the petals of flowers silently fold themselves up at night, similarly the winds have gathered up and are now no longer blowing.

We are out of tune—We cannot appreciate nature or learn anything from it because we have not tried to love natural things.

A Pagan—Heathen or non-Christian. The poet refers especially to the Greeks and the Romans.

Suckled—Nursed in; trained in.

Creed outworn—The Greeks and the Romans deified natural powers. The poet here refers to that creed, which has now ceased to exist.

Outworn—Old and abandoned.

So might I—So that I might.

Lea—Meadow.

Proteus—Old Man of the Sea, who rose at mid-day from the sea, according to the fables and slept on some island with sea-monsters round about him.

Triton—In Greek mythology, a son of the Sea-god Posidon who is represented as half-man and half-fish with horse's fore-feet and blowing a trumpet made of a conch-shell, to control the waves of the sea. The word 'wreathed' refers to the coiled state of the conch-shell.

EXERCISES

- (1) What does the poet say about the tendencies of the people of his time?
- (2) What are the scenes of nature which have ceased to inspire people in the present age?

7. I LOVE ALL BEAUTEIOUS THINGS

NOTES

Hasty—Swiftly passing, short-lived.

Joy—Feel joy.

Like the empty words of a dream—Like the unreal things of a dream. One may dream of beautiful things while asleep, only to find them all unreal and impossible to realise when one wakes up. How often do we dream of noble things in our youth which we find we cannot do when we grow up!

EXERCISES

- (1) What, according to the poet, is the best way of praising God?
- (2) What does the poet propose to do for himself?
- (3) What is the figure of speech used in the last two lines of the second stanza.

8. PATRIOTISM

NOTES

Whose heart bath us'er within him burn'd—Whose heart has never felt the excitement of love for his native land.

Strand—Sea-shore.

Minstrel raptures swell—No poet will sing songs in his honour.

Self—Wealth.

Consentred all in self—Altogether selfish.

EXERCISES

- (1) What does the poet say about a man who is not proud of his motherland?
- (2) What are the feelings of a patriot according to the poet?

9. THE SCHOLAR

NOTES

My days among the dead are past—I spend my days among the books written by famous authors now dead.

The Mighty minds of old—The books written by great authors of ancient times.

Never-failing—True.

With whom I converse day by day—I read these books daily and think over the subjects with which they deal.

Weal—Prosperity.

Relief—Comfort.

Woe—Sorrow.

My thoughts are with the dead—When I read the lives of the great authors now dead, my thoughts go to the times when they were living.

Their lessons—The lessons derived from their lives and writings.

Anon—Soon.

My place with them will be—I shall die soon and be with the dead authors.

And I will then travel on—My spirit will progress along with the spirits of dead authors.

Fatuity—Eternity.

That will not perish in the dust—That will not be forgotten.

EXERCISES

- (1) Why does the poet call books his 'never-failing friends'?
- (2) What instructions does the poet 'seek and find' from books?

10. IF—

NOTES

Keep your head—Remain cool and calm in the midst of difficulties.

If you can trust yourself—If you possess self-reliance in the discharge of your duty.

Make allowance for their doubting too—Treat or judge others' criticisms leniently and not lose your head on that account.

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies—If people spread lies about you, you should not do so.

If you can meet just the same—Success should not make you proud; and failure, instead of leading you to disappointment, should be an incentive to further effort.

Triumph—Success.

Disaster—Failure. (See Q. 3 below).

Impostor—One who assumes a false personality; a swindler.

The author means to say that success and failure in life as well as in sport should not deflect you from the right path.

Twisted—Misrepresented.

Broken—Destroyed or undone.

Pitch-and-toss—A game with coins, depending more or less on chance.

Common touch—Virtues of the common people.

Unforgiving minute—If a person wastes his minute or time, which will never come back again, nobody will help him.

EXERCISES

- (1) What qualities and habits should a person cultivate to attain success in life?

- (2) Why are 'Triumph' and 'Disaster' called impostors?
- (3) Where are the lines 11 and 12 inscribed? (These two lines are inscribed above one of the Entrance gates to the famous Tennis courts of Wimbledon, near London, where the world championship matches in Tennis are played).
- (4) Why were these lines so selected?

11. PIPPA'S SONG

NOTES

Dew-pearled—Covered with dew-drops which shine like pearls.

The snail's on the thorn—The day is quite warm and bright and even the snail has come out of its shell to sit on the haw-thorn (thorn) tree.

All's right with the world—This illustrates Browning's optimistic outlook on life. It is the key-line in the poem.

EXERCISES

- (1) What lesson do you learn from this poem?
- (2) Explain: 'God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world.'

12. TO BLOSSOMS

NOTES

Dats—Span of life.

An hour or half's delight—To last only for a short while.

To bid good-night—To fade away.

Brave—Beautiful. Shakespeare too uses the word 'brave' in this sense in the Tempest.

Glide—To move silently.

EXERCISES

- (1) Why is the poet so sad?
- (2) What did the poet hope for when he saw the fruitful tree?
- (3) What lesson do you learn from this poem?

13. ON HIS BLINDNESS

NOTES

My light is spent—My eye-sight is gone.

Ere half my days—Milton became blind in 1652, when he was forty-four years of age.

One talent—Talent was a coin in ancient times. Here it means: High mental ability—Milton here refers to Christ's Parable of the Talents in the Bible. A lord went away after giving some talents (coins or money) to his servants. On his return he asked his servants to give an account of the amount spent by them. Two utilised their talents in trade and increased them but the third, who had received only one, simply buried it in the ground and on demand returned it to his master. This unprofitable servant was condemned as 'useless'.

Though my soul more bent—Though my soul is more bent (inclined).

Lest He returning chide—Lest He should rebuke me that I had not utilised my literary genius in the service of God.

Doth God exact day-labour, light denied—Does God expect full day's labour from me when I am blind?

Fondly—Foolishly.

His own gifts—Talents as given in the Parable.

His state is kingly—God is a great King, who has thousands of angels and other swift messengers to do His bidding (carrying out his orders) over land and ocean.

They also serve who only stand and wait—One should resign oneself to the will of God as Milton did. This is the only way of tiding over one's grief and attaining peace in this life.

EXERCISES

- (1) Why does Milton complain against God in the first part of his Sonnet?
- (2) To what conclusion does Milton come in the second part of his sonnet?

14. THE NOBLE NATURE

NOTES

Bulk—Size.

Doth makes Man better be—That makes a man appear better.

Bald—Bare.

Sere—Wither.

A lily of a day is fairer far in May—Although a lily flower lives only for a day, yet it spreads light and beauty all round even in that short time.

Flower of light—A flower that spreads beauty and cheerfulness.

In small proportions we just beauties see—Even small things can be truly beautiful and useful.

Life may perfect be—Similarly, a short life may be perfect otherwise.

EXERCISES

- (1) Why does Ben Jonson prefer the lily of a day to a long-standing Oak tree?

(2) Which would you prefer—a long worthless life or a short useful life, and why?

(3) Explain with reference to the context—

(i) In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measure life may perfect be.

(ii) A Lily of a day is fairer far in May.

15. MERCY

NOTES

Is not strained—Is spontaneous.

'Tis... mightiest—It is most powerful in those who are very highly placed and wield much influence.

Becomes—Suits, fits.

It... crown—The possession of mercy is more becoming and important to a king than his crown.

Sceptre—The rod of authority and power.

Temporal—As opposed to spiritual; worldly.

Awe—Fear mixed with respect.

Majesty—Stateliness; kingship.

The... majesty—Worldly power is a quality found in kings whom people fear and revere.

Wherein... kings—It is because of this earthly power that kings are dreaded.

Mercy... sway—Mercy ranks much higher than the worldly power of the mightiest king.

It... himself—It is a quality found in God.

Likest—Most like that of.

Mercy seasons justice—Justice is tempered with mercy; mercy and justice go together.

EXERCISES

- (1) Why does the poet consider 'mercy' to be an attribute of God Himself?
- (2) Explain in your own words : Sceptred sway; Mercy seasons justice; It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
- (3) Give in your own words the substance of the lines.

16. THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

NOTES

The old order changeth yielding place to new—The old system which has had its day, must give place to a new and stronger system.

God fulfils himself in many ways—God has many methods of accomplishing His purposes on earth. The King says that the institution of the Round Table has now become useless and other systems must replace it.

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world—Lest men should grow weak and lifeless by following a good old custom for a pretty long time. Change is the law of nature. If the old customs are not changed according to the needs of the time, they will simply make the condition of the people worse.

May He within Himself make pure—May God accept my work by purifying it of all its unworthiness.

That nourish a blind life within the brain—That live by instinct and are devoid of spiritual life.

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God—Attached to God by priceless bonds of love. The meaning is that every person who prays is a spiritual link in the chain of love between the Earth and its Creator.

EXERCISES

1. What answer did King Arthur give to Sir Bedivere ?
2. Explain in your own words :—
 - (a) 'The old order changeth yielding place to new
And God fulfils Himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'
 - (b) 'Bound by gold chains to the feet of God.'

17. A LAMENT

NOTES

On whose last steps I climb—Life is compared to a ladder and the poet imagines himself standing on its last rung—the period allotted to him is coming to a close. (The poet died a year after, perhaps he had a premonition of the approaching end).

No more—O never more—The poet is in utter despair. He knows full well that the loss of the power of appreciation of the beauties of nature cannot be regained by him. (Cf. Ode to the West Wind : I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed).

bear—white frost.

faint-heart—The sense of frustration has overwhelmed the poet so much that he has lost all power of appreciating nature.

EXERCISES

1. Write the substance of this poem.
2. Mention and define the figures of speech used in this poem.

18. HENRY AUSTIN DOBSON

NOTES

I have .. . want—I have no desire for fame.

With no .. . cheer—without any friend to wish him to be of good spirits.

Who .. funeral—Who remembers his good actions and qualities and forgets his faults.

EXERCISES

1. Why does the poet prefer friendship to fame?
2. Mention and define the figures of speech used in the first stanza.

19. JAMES MONTGOMERY

NOTES

He...falls—whether he is victorious or whether he loses his life. Note there is either victory or death, and no defeat.

Delve—dig.

Diadem—kingly crown.

Delve...diadems—the idea is that we should prefer the acquisition of knowledge to the kingly crown.

Virtue...happiness—True happiness lies in being virtuous.

Supernal—divine.

EXERCISES

1. What ideal should every youth of the Motherland place before himself?
2. What appeal has been made by the poet in this poem?
3. Explain in your own words the last two lines of the second stanza of this poem.

20. 'JANA-GANA-MANA'

NOTES

Rouses—Inspires.

Mingles—Mixes with.

Music—Rhythmical flow of water.

Chanted—Uttered musically.

Offerings—Gifts.

Tribulations—Trials and sufferings.

Stupor—Torpidity, Helpless amazement.

EXERCISES

1. How do you like this song as the National Anthem of India? Would you prefer it to Bande Mataram?
 2. Give in your own words the substance of this poem.
 3. Explain lines 6—8.
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